

Recommendations

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1 ReachOUT (Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Youth Project)

Short-term

- 1.1 Given that young people under the age of consent already access ReachOUT's services, and that young people accessing services at an earlier age seems to be the trend (see page 225), ReachOUT should amend its target age range from 16-25 to 14 to 25 (in line with Reading Youth and Community Service). In terms of young people under the age of consent accessing services, it should be remembered that the age of consent refers to the legal age of consent for sexual activity, not the provision of services for young people. It is therefore a political rather than legal issue.
- 1.2 ReachOUT should expand its Book and Video Library for young people and maintain a postal loan service. This service should be widely promoted.
- 1.3 ReachOUT should maintain and expand its resource bank for young people and workers, keeping it up to date. This service should be widely promoted.
- 1.4 ReachOUT should maintain and expand its Workers Resource Service. This service should be widely promoted among local and regional statutory and voluntary sector agencies and workers.
- 1.5 ReachOUT should produce a quarterly newsletter. The newsletter should carry details of the Youth Group's programme, an advice section, details of forthcoming events, news, a health section, etc.

- 1.6 ReachOUT should develop an Internet site with details of the Youth Group, the programme, the research report, links to other sites, etc. Being on-line will also enable ReachOUT to respond to e-mail.
- 1.7 ReachOUT should produce new publicity materials (flyers, leaflets, posters and a credit card-sized 'info-card') aimed at young people and workers. There is a need to ensure that all publicity is inclusive in terms of images and language.
- 1.8 ReachOUT should target publicity material at under-represented groups of young people: young Asian and Black people, young women and those who work in the private sector.
- 1.9 ReachOUT should increase the number of activity-based sessions.
- 1.10 ReachOUT should develop a programme of targeted work: specialist sessions for young Asian and Black people, young women, those coming out, those aged 14 and 15, those aged 16-20, those aged 21-25, an information session, one to one session, etc.
- 1.11 ReachOUT should develop a session for new members, where young people can be inducted and have more personal time with Youth Workers before accessing other sessions.
- 1.12 ReachOUT should develop a team of older young people to act as mentors to new members.
- 1.13 ReachOUT should encourage more young people-led sessions.
- 1.14 ReachOUT should encourage and train young people to staff the Info-line. This should be an information line rather than a helpline, providing details of bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations, ReachOUT's programme, etc.
- 1.15 ReachOUT should employ a full-time Youth Worker and develop a team of paid and voluntary Youth Workers to undertake recommendations 1.2-1.14.
- 1.16 ReachOUT should develop a team of session-based Outreach Workers (both paid and voluntary) to develop a programme of outreach work with young people.
- 1.17 ReachOUT should develop an Outreach Peer Support Team (OPST). This team of young people, after appropriate and sufficient training and with on-going supervision, should develop a programme of outreach work in local colleges, schools, universities, youth centres, bisexual, gay and lesbian scene venues, etc. The purpose of the OPST should be to provide advice, information, support and perhaps a mentoring role to other young bisexuals, gays and lesbians currently not accessing services. The OPST would work together with the Outreach Workers (see 1.16).
- 1.18 ReachOUT should encourage the development of a social group for bisexuals, gays and lesbians, aged 22-30. This should be based in a café-type environment and should develop as an independent group.
- 1.19 ReachOUT should conduct regular evaluation exercises to identify young people's issues and needs and develop the programme and other work accordingly.
- 1.20 ReachOUT should secure a large *permanent* base for the young people and workers. The base should be *safe* (for workers and young people) and accessible (both physically and in a central location).

- 1.21 ReachOUT should move towards a multi-agency Management Committee with nominated representatives from key statutory and voluntary sector agencies, in addition to interested individuals. This will aid inter-agency working, provide new resource and support structures, funding opportunities, etc.
- 1.22 ReachOUT should continue to organise an annual Development Day where Management Committee members, staff and young people meet to review the organisation's progress, discuss issues, devise an annual work plan, discuss future direction, etc.
- 1.23 ReachOUT should continue to support the development of the In, Out and About Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Youth Project for West Berkshire.
- 1.24 ReachOUT should encourage and facilitate the development of bisexual, gay and lesbian youth projects in Bracknell Forest and Windsor and Maidenhead, working in partnership with the Youth and Community Service in both Bracknell Forest and Windsor and Maidenhead. ReachOUT should co-ordinate a multi-agency steering group to further these projects which should develop as independent organisations.
- 1.25 ReachOUT should maintain its close links with Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline (as the principal referral agency). ReachOUT should deliver training sessions on (a) bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues and needs and (b) the referral procedure, to all new Helpline volunteers.
- 1.26 ReachOUT should ensure that key agencies and workers are aware of the referral procedure for young people wishing to access ReachOUT (i.e. through Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline).

Medium-term

- 1.27 ReachOUT should employ more Asian and Black Youth Workers.
- 1.28 ReachOUT should employ a full-time Outreach and Youth Worker to undertake recommendations 1.2-1.20 and possibly 1.30, together with the Outreach Team, Outreach Peer Support Team and the Youth Worker Team.
- 1.29 To ensure the sustainability of ReachOUT in the longer term, ReachOUT should consolidate and diversify its funding sources. Given that no one agency can fund the ReachOUT project, there is no alternative to multi-agency partnership funding. Berkshire Health Authority (AIDS Allocation, Joint Finance, etc.), charitable trusts, Reading Borough Council (Annual Grant, Youth and Community Service, etc.) should be targeted to fund the core work (i.e. the Youth Group). Other projects, which are specific in nature (both in terms of objectives and time-scale), could be funded by national funding bodies such as Children in Need, Comic Relief, National Lottery, National Youth Agency, etc.
- 1.30 Given the difficulties of recruiting experienced and qualified Youth Workers to staff the bisexual, gay and lesbian youth projects in Berkshire, a possible solution may involve ReachOUT Youth Workers staffing sessions for other projects on a contractual basis. However, these projects should maintain their independence and management capacity; they should not become satellites of ReachOUT.

Long-term

- 1.31 ReachOUT should develop audio, video and training resources on bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues, utilising the evidence from this report, and involving young people. Resources should be developed in collaboration with other agencies.
- 1.32 ReachOUT should facilitate the development of a regional Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Youth Network (joint activities by youth projects, newsletter, social events, annual gathering of young people, etc.). ReachOUT should also facilitate the development of a regional Youth Workers Network to share ideas, good practice, resources and skills, offer support, campaign, etc.
- 1.33 ReachOUT should assess the need for an After-school Homework Club. Given widespread bullying and other forms of homophobia, and its impact on young people's confidence, self-esteem and possibly academic attainment, there may be a need for extra-curricular intervention in the form of a Homework Club. Its purpose would be to offer bisexual, gay and lesbian students (a) academic support, (b) emotional support and (c) personal and social education (around building confidence, coping mechanisms, bisexual, gay and lesbian culture and history, sexual health, etc.). The Homework Club should develop a multi-agency staff team to ensure a holistic service. The staff team should include counsellors, health workers, parents of bisexuals, gays and lesbians, teachers (either bisexual, gay or lesbian teachers or those who are supportive) and Youth Workers.
- 1.34 ReachOUT should assess the need for a supported lodgings scheme (for example the 'Big Brothers and Sisters' scheme as pioneered by the Albert Kennedy Trust), where young people are placed with gay and lesbians couples who provide a safe and supportive environment. ReachOUT should initiate a dialogue with Reading Social Services on this issue.
- 1.35 ReachOUT should lobby for the provision of specific emergency accommodation for bisexual, gay and lesbian young people. ReachOUT should initiate a dialogue with the Council's Housing Department, other housing agencies and Reading Social Services on this issue.
- 1.36 ReachOUT should organise a National Bisexual Gay and Lesbian Youth Conference to (a) disseminate the research report's findings and recommendations and (b) identify and share good practice. The conference should be organised by young people and workers for young people and workers, including activities, speakers and workshops of interest to both.
- 1.37 ReachOUT should have input into local teacher training courses and the training of Youth and Community Workers around bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues, utilising local and national research.
- 1.38 ReachOUT should assess the need for, and encourage the development of, a carers' and parents' support group. This should develop as an independent organisation.
- 1.39 ReachOUT should employ a Trainer, or facilitate the development of an independent training agency, to provide training to local agencies and workers.
- 1.40 ReachOUT should employ a Development Worker to (a) act as a consultant and 'watchdog' re the research report's recommendations, and (b) identify gaps in service provision and undertake community development work to meet local needs. The Development Worker should also undertake recommendations 1.23, 1.24, 1.26 and 1.31-1.36.

- 1.41 ReachOUT should facilitate the development of multi-agency Outreach Teams comprised of alcohol and drug workers, health promotion workers, housing services Youth Workers, etc. to provide ‘surgeries’ where young people can directly access advice, information and services. The teams should develop a programme of outreach work in bisexual, gay and lesbian scene venues, youth projects, etc.

2 Reading Borough Council

Corporate Policy

- 2.1 Although Reading Borough Council’s Equality Statement refers to sexuality, the Council’s target groups should be extended to specifically include bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people (alongside Black communities, people with disabilities, the elderly, people on low incomes and women).
- 2.2 The Equality Strategy Action Plan should include a set of specific (and achievable) targets for improving services for bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people, with a timetable for their implementation. The Equalities Annual Report should include a specific section on these.
- 2.3 The Council should establish an Equality Committee, responsible for the development and implementation of the Equality Statement and the Equality Strategy Action Plan.
- 2.4 An Equality Committee should establish working groups to focus on the issues of bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people, and those of other target groups. These working groups would provide a forum for co-ordination, the sharing of good practice and information, the monitoring of progress, etc.
- 2.5 The Chief Executive should establish an inter-departmental group, a Social Inclusion Unit, covering all sections of the Council to ensure co-ordination, the sharing of good practice and information, and the planning of joint initiatives around bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people’s issues, and other equality issues.
- 2.6 The Equality Statement and Equality Strategy Action Plan should be actively promoted within the Council, and to the wider public.
- 2.7 The Council should lead the development of a Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Forum. Members of the Forum should include representatives from bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, interested individuals and representatives from key private, statutory and voluntary sector agencies. The purpose of the Forum should be to (a) act as a ‘watchdog’ re the implementation of the research report’s recommendations, (b) facilitate discussion of bisexual, gay and lesbian issues and needs, (c) enable the sharing of information and good practice, (d) aid the development and co-ordination of services, serving to highlight any gaps in provision and (e) administer the ‘Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian-friendly’ benchmark award (see 10.11).
- 2.8 The Council should provide regular guidance, information and seminars for elected members and officers around bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people’s issues, and other equality issues.
- 2.9 The Council should ensure that all documents, and images used in documents and publicity, are inclusive, positive and representative of all sections of the community.

- 2.10 The Council should ensure that the language used within and by the Council is inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- 2.11 The Council should ensure that all service planning documents (including partnership plans) address equality commitments, specifying *how* bisexual, gay lesbian and trans-gendered people's issues have been considered and included. These should include the Behaviour Support Plan, Children's Services Plan, Community Care Plan, Drug Reference Group, Education Development Plan, Health Improvement Programme, Housing Allocations Plan, Housing Investment Programme, Housing Strategy, Individual School Plans, Mental Health Strategy, Probation Service Plan, Thames Valley Police Area Plan and Force Plan, Youth Justice Plan, etc.
- 2.12 The Council should collect and monitor data that is age, disability, ethnicity, gender and sexuality specific. This should be done in a sensitive and standardised way. This data should be used for policy and service development and planning.
- 2.13 The Council should incorporate equality commitments into grant conditions.
- 2.14 The Council should develop a training programme around bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people's issues, and other equality issues, for elected members and all staff.
- 2.15 The Council should provide a supportive environment for bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered staff and develop a Discrimination and Harassment Policy to combat abuse, bullying and harassment.
- 2.16 The Council should ensure that all its staff are aware of the Council's policies on bisexuals, gays, lesbians and trans-gendered people, the Education Department's resource bank and database (see 2.29), and how to refer young people to ReachOUT and other bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations (see 1.25).
- 2.17 The Council should *permanently* display ReachOUT publicity material (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations) in all Council venues i.e. Council offices, libraries, Town Hall, etc.
- 2.18 The Council should produce and distribute a booklet: 'Reading Borough Council's Commitments to the Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Trans-gendered Communities'. This should detail the Council's aspirations, commitments and policies in terms of Community Safety, Housing, Personnel, Social Services etc. and how the Council is helping to build bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered community infrastructure through grant-giving and partnerships.

Community Safety

- 2.19 The Council should continue to ensure that the community safety process addresses the issue of homophobia. The local research conducted by the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group, in partnership with ReachOUT, should be considered and included in future audits. The community safety strategy should continue to include specific objectives to tackle homophobia.
- 2.20 The Council should actively link with and support the work of the Homophobia Liaison Officer nominated by Thames Valley Police.
- 2.21 The Council should take the lead in developing a Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum. The Forum should meet quarterly, involving representatives from the statutory and voluntary sector. Elected members and/or officers from the Council's Community

Safety, Education, Housing, Social Exclusion Unit, Social Services, Youth and Community Service departments, etc. should attend together with representatives from bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, the police, secondary schools, youth centres, etc. and the voluntary sector. The Forum should enable the sharing of information and good practice, the development and co-ordination of policies and services, the monitoring of homophobic incidents and agencies' response and the development of a proactive campaign to tackle homophobia, focusing particularly on schools and youth centres.

- 2.22 The Council should actively promote and support the countywide Homophobia Reporting Service, operated by Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline. The Homophobia Reporting Service gives victims the opportunity to anonymously and confidentially report crimes and access support. It compliments existing police reporting systems, one of its objectives being to increase the level of reporting.
- 2.23 The Council should actively promote and support the work of the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group. The aim of this multi-agency group is to work towards making local communities safer for bisexual, gay, lesbian and trans-gendered people.
- 2.24 The Council should ensure that it collects and monitors data on homophobic incidents. This data should be shared with the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum.
- 2.25 The Council and Thames Valley Police, working in partnership with other agencies, should consider how the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1995 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 could be utilised to deal with homophobia and protect bisexuals, gays and lesbians from abuse, bullying, harassment and violence. Measures may include Anti-Social Behaviour Orders, Child Curfew Orders, the Housing Protocol, Restorative Justice, etc.

Education

(Also see recommendations for schools: Section 11.)

Headteachers have a legal duty to protect students from homophobia, see page 54.

- 2.26 The Council's ongoing financial and political support of ReachOUT will enable ReachOUT to assist schools in meeting their legal duties.
- 2.27 The Education Department should develop advice and guidance for schools on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, for example, the age of consent, Section 28 (and if repealed, what replaces it), good practice and policy development (anti-bullying, equality and sex education policies), etc.
- 2.28 The Education Department should provide training for education welfare officers, governors, headteachers, teachers and other staff on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.
- 2.29 The Education Department should develop a resource bank (of information, training packs and videos, etc.) on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues for loan by schools and other agencies.
- 2.30 The Education Department should maintain an up-to-date database of local and national bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations and services. This should be accessible to teachers and other workers.

- 2.31 The Education Department should monitor and record all cases of homophobic abuse, bullying and harassment reported by schools and/or young people. The Education Department should evaluate and monitor the response of schools to incidents and provide appropriate advice and guidance. This information should be shared with the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum.
- 2.32 A representative from the Education Department should attend the Reading Homophobia Incidents Forum (see 2.21).

Housing

“In October 1999 the Law Lords ruled that a gay man had a right to inherit his partner’s tenancy. The landmark ruling stated that a homosexual couple in a stable family relationship could be defined as a family.” (Dyer, 1999).

With the above in mind,

- 2.33 The Housing Department should offer joint tenancies and right of succession to same-sex couples.
- 2.33 The Housing Department *should* consider sexual identity as a contributory factor in cases of young people presenting themselves to the Council as homeless (Section 175 and 185 of the 1996 Housing Act).
- 2.34 The Housing Department *should not* consider young people coming out (as bisexual, gay or lesbian) as an act of intentional homelessness.
- 2.35 The above positions in terms of practice should be formalised as policy, with guidance for housing workers (the Standard Operating Procedures).
- 2.36 The Housing Department should provide specific training for its workers on bisexual, gay and lesbian housing issues and needs, utilising local and national research.
- 2.37 The Housing Department should ensure that staff are aware of, and have access to, the Education Department’s resource bank and database (see 2.29).
- 2.38 Using the Crime and Disorder Act 1995 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997, the Housing Department (with Thames Valley Police) should extend the Housing Protocol to enable the eviction of homophobic tenants after a series of warnings (see 2.25).
- 2.39 The Housing Department should monitor and record all cases of homophobic abuse and harassment suffered by those accessing or seeking housing services provided by the Council (either in the housing association, local authority or private rented sector). This information should be shared with the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum.
- 2.40 The Housing Department should develop working links with ReachOUT and its workers should be aware of the referral procedure (see 1.25).
- 2.41 The Housing Department should assess the need for specialist provision for young homeless bisexuals, gays and lesbians (see 1.35).

- 2.42 A representative from the Housing Department should attend the Reading Homophobia Incidents Forum (see 2.21).
- 2.43 The Housing Department should use its leverage over other housing providers to ensure equality of access and opportunity for bisexuals, gays and lesbians.

Social Services

- 2.44 Social Services (particularly the Adolescent, Community Resource, Mental Health and Youth Resource Teams) should conduct a review of policies and procedures to ensure the inclusion of bisexual, gay and lesbian issues.
- 2.45 Social Services should *permanently* display ReachOUT publicity material (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations) in its sections and services.
- 2.46 Social Services should ensure that all young bisexuals, gays and lesbians in its care, either in local authority care or supported lodgings, enjoy a safe and supportive environment (see 1.34).
- 2.47 Social Services should ensure that it has access to safe and supportive emergency accommodation for young bisexuals, gays and lesbians.
- 2.48 Social Services should provide training for its staff on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.
- 2.49 Social Services staff should be aware of, and have access to, the Education Department's resource bank and database (see 2.29 and 2.30).
- 2.50 Social Services should develop working links with ReachOUT and its workers should be aware of the referral procedure (see 1.25).
- 2.51 A representative from Social Services should attend the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum (see 2.21).

Youth and Community Service

- 2.52 Reading Youth and Community Service should second Youth Workers, and outreach workers, to assist ReachOUT until full-time workers are secured.
- 2.53 Reading Youth and Community Service should provide ReachOUT's paid and voluntary staff with *free* access to Youth and Community Worker (and other) training programmes. This will help local bisexuals, gays and lesbians to develop the skills necessary to develop their own community infrastructure.
- 2.54 ReachOUT should be informed and invited to participate in all Reading Youth and Community Service activities and events.
- 2.55 ReachOUT's full-time staff should attend the Reading Youth and Community Service district staff team meetings.
- 2.56 The Youth and Community Service should conduct a review of policies and procedures to ensure the inclusion of bisexual, gay and lesbian issues.
- 2.57 The Youth and Community Service should provide training for all Youth Workers on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.

- 2.58 The Youth and Community Service should develop a resource bank and database specific to bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues, to compliment those developed by the Education Department (see 2.29 and 2.30). These should be promoted within the service.
- 2.59 The Youth and Community Service should undertake regular proactive work on equality issues.
- 2.60 The Youth and Community Service should ensure that it promotes inclusive and positive images and literature in its centres.
- 2.61 All Youth Workers should be aware of the referral procedure for ReachOUT (see 1.25).
- 2.62 The Youth and Community Service should *permanently* display ReachOUT publicity material (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations) in all its centres.
- 2.63 A representative from the Youth and Community Service should attend the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum (see 2.21).

3 Health Issues

- 3.1 Specific services should be developed for 14- and 15-year old bisexuals, gays and lesbians (see 1.1 and 1.10).
- 3.2 The Community Alcohol Team, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should (a) develop an awareness campaign for young people around safe drinking levels, support services, etc. and (b) develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gay and lesbians to offer advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 3.3 The Community Alcohol Team, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should assess the need for a bisexual, gay and lesbian Alcoholics Anonymous group for Reading.
- 3.4 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations should encourage the development of non-scene activities and space (i.e. not based around alcohol-selling venues), for example a Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Community Centre (see 13.1).
- 3.5 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations should develop a database of bisexual organisations, services and venues for service users.
- 3.6 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, in partnership with Health promotion, schools and youth centres, should develop a multi-agency Anti-Bullying Campaign to raise awareness of homophobic bullying and sources of support.
- 3.7 Health Promotion and the Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with young people selling sex (in public sex environments, scene venues, etc.).
- 3.8 Berkshire Women's Aid, Sahara (an Asian women's project) and Social Services, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should (a) develop an awareness campaign for young people to encourage the reporting of domestic violence

- and (b) develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gays and lesbians to offer advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 3.9 The Reading Inter-Agency Domestic Violence Strategy should actively consider, include and promote the research findings on domestic violence.
- 3.10 Neutral Zone, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should (a) develop an awareness campaign for young people around safer drug use, support services, etc. and (b) develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gays and lesbians to offer advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 3.11 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, in partnership with other agencies, should (a) develop an awareness campaign for young people around eating disorders and (b) develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gays and lesbians to offer advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 3.12 Statutory and voluntary mental health agencies, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should (a) develop an awareness campaign for young people around mental health issues, support services, etc. and (b) develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gays and lesbians to offer advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 3.13 Statutory and voluntary mental health agencies should deliver the Service Standard Guarantee (see 9.1-9.8).
- 3.14 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, in partnership with other agencies, should assess need for a helpline and support group in Reading for those who have been raped and sexually abused. Specific services for men and women may need to be developed.
- 3.15 Health Promotion and the Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop safer sex packs for bisexual and gay men and bisexual and lesbian women. These should be free and widely available.
- 3.16 Health Promotion and the Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop credit card-sized 'info-cards' on a range of bisexual, gay and lesbian health issues and support services, for use by service users.
- 3.17 Health Promotion and the Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop a handbook on bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgendered issues and support services, for use by health agencies and workers.
- 3.18 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, in partnership with health agencies, should assess the need for a young women's sexual health project and/or specialist provision.
- 3.19 Health Promotion and the Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should deliver an integrated sexual health system by (a) undertaking an audit of current sexual health service provision, (b) identifying service needs and (c) developing a sexual health promotion strategy with specific objectives, targets and a timetable to meet these needs.
- 3.20 The Florey Unit and Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop an awareness campaign for young people on STIs, particularly HIV and hepatitis B (including vaccinations).
- 3.21 GPs, the Florey Unit (GUM clinic) and Primary Care Groups should deliver the Service Standard Guarantee (see 9.1-9.8).

- 3.22 GPs and the Florey Unit should not record service users' sexual identity on medical records unless it specifically relates to a medical condition and there should be a standard procedure (i.e. one that doesn't assume heterosexuality) for questioning users on issues relating to sexual behaviour and identity (e.g. sexual history). However, they should monitor the sexual identity of service users (see 3.27 and 10.8).
- 3.23 The Florey Unit should maintain its free provision of vaccinations against hepatitis B for bisexuals, gays and lesbians who request it.
- 3.24 The Florey Unit and Men for Men Project, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should assess the need for specialist GUM services, including bisexual, gay and lesbian clinics, young people's clinics, Asian and Black young people's needs, an outreach programme and surgeries in bisexual, gay and lesbian space.
- 3.25 The Florey Unit, Health Promotion and Men for Men Project should actively assist and support ReachOUT. They should also work with the Education Department and Youth and Community Service, and schools and youth centres, to address bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues.
- 3.26 Primary Care Groups should actively consider the health issues and needs of bisexuals, gays and lesbians when commissioning services, adopting the precautionary principle and favouring interventionist and proactive work, particularly around mental health (see 3.29).
- 3.27 Primary Care Groups should deliver a training package on monitoring service users' sexual identity in a sensitive and standardised manner.
- 3.28 Primary Care Groups should deliver the Service Standard Guarantee (see 9.1-9.8) and should use their leverage over individual practices to the same end.
- 3.29 Where appropriate, the Clinical Governance agenda should consider the health issues and needs of bisexuals, gays and lesbians, utilising local and national research, to improve care and services accordingly.
- 3.30 The Health Improvement Programme (HImP) should actively consider the report's findings and recommendations as part of the HImP's assessment of local needs, resource mapping, priority setting, strategy development, partnership working and expenditure. Reading's Health Improvement Programme should address the issues and needs of bisexuals, gays and lesbians, particularly around priorities such as alcohol and drugs, reducing health inequalities, mental health and sexual health. The research findings, for example, highlighted the *vulnerability* of bisexual, gay and lesbian youth to depression, suicide and self-harm and the incidence of homophobia within the mental health system. Specific objectives and a timetable for implementation should be included in the Reading Health Improvement Programme.
- 3.31 Berkshire Health Authority should develop a resource bank (of information, training packs and videos, etc.) on bisexual, gay and lesbian health issues for loan by health workers.
- 3.32 Berkshire Health Authority should develop an up-to-date database of local and national bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations and services. This should be accessible to health workers.
- 3.33 Berkshire Health Authority should encourage GP surgeries, GUM services, Health Promotion and other health agencies to *permanently* display ReachOUT publicity material (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations).

4 Housing Issues

- 4.1 Housing agencies (the Council's Housing Department, hostels and housing associations) should deliver the Service Standard Guarantee (see 9.1-9.8).
- 4.2 Housing agencies, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop a Code of Conduct for service users/tenants to ensure equality commitments. This Code should be incorporated into the Council's Landlord Accreditation Scheme.
- 4.3 The local 'Connect' bisexual, gay and lesbian newsletter should include a section for people looking for, and offering, accommodation, including shared accommodation.
- 4.4 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, in partnership with housing agencies, should develop a system for matching bisexual, gay and lesbian people's housing needs with safe and trusted providers (see 4.2).
- 4.5 Housing agencies, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop a multi-agency programme of outreach work with bisexuals, gays and lesbians to provide housing and homelessness advice, information and support (see 1.41).
- 4.6 Housing agencies, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should develop a multi-agency Carers/Family Mediation Service, enabling intervention to prevent bisexual, gay and lesbian youth homelessness.
- 4.7 Housing agencies, in partnership with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, should assess the need for specific emergency accommodation for bisexual, gay and lesbian young people (see 1.35).
- 4.8 Housing agencies should identify, adopt and share good practice around bisexual, gay and lesbian issues.
- 4.9 Housing agencies and providers should *permanently* display ReachOUT's publicity (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations).
- 4.1 The Council's Housing Department and No.5 (Youth Counselling Service) should promote the Deposit Guarantee Scheme for young people via bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations and scene venues.
- 4.2 The Reading Unified Monitoring System (RUMS) should include the monitoring of service users' sexual identity.
- 4.3 Housing agencies, in partnership with the Council's Housing Department and Thames Valley Police, should extend the Housing Protocol to enable the eviction of homophobic tenants after a series of warnings (see 2.25 and 2.38).

5 Asian and Black Issues

ReachOUT

- 5.1 ReachOUT should employ more Asian and Black Youth Workers.
- 5.2 ReachOUT should develop a programme of Asian and Black-only activities and projects. These activities and projects should focus on cultures, histories and religions, developing middle way strategies, developing coping mechanisms for racism, etc.
- 5.3 ReachOUT's programme should include sessions on Asian and Black issues (cultures, religions, etc.) and should address issues such as racism, homophobia, racism and sexism within Asian and Black communities, etc.
- 5.4 ReachOUT should assess the need for an Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian support group (open to all ages). This should develop as an independent organisation.
- 5.5 ReachOUT should develop a team of older Asian and Black young people to act as mentors to new members who are Asian or Black.
- 5.6 ReachOUT – in partnership with other bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations and Asian, Black and other ethnic minority organisations – should develop a holistic support system for young Asian and Black bisexuals, gays and lesbians who need it, perhaps adopting the case worker model.
- 5.7 ReachOUT should ensure that the organisation's public image, and the imagery and language used in publicity material, are inclusive and welcoming of Asian and Black young people.
- 5.8 ReachOUT should develop audio, video and training resources on Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues, utilising the evidence from this report, and involving young people. Resources should be developed in collaboration with other agencies.
- 5.9 ReachOUT should address Asian and Black issues and needs when developing its Outreach Peer Support Team and programme of outreach work.
- 5.10 ReachOUT should maintain its awareness of the Asian and Black 'veto' (see page 193-194) when planning and delivering its work with Asian and Black young people. Networking, alliance-building and constructive dialogue constitute possible strategies for overcoming/circumventing resistance.
- 5.11 ReachOUT – in partnership with other bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, Asian, Black and other ethnic minority organisations and Thames Valley Police – should develop a multi-agency Carers/Family Mediation Service to intervene to prevent Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian youth homelessness (see 4.6).
- 5.12 ReachOUT should widely publicise the research findings pertaining to Asian and Black young people (in Asian and Black journals, magazines, newspapers, etc.).
- 5.13 Asian, Black and other ethnic minority organisations should *permanently* display ReachOUT's publicity (and that of other bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations).
- 5.14 Asian, Black and other ethnic minority organisations should be aware of the referral procedure for ReachOUT (see 1.25).

General

- 5.15 Reading Youth and Community Service should employ more Asian and Black Youth Workers, and more Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian Youth Workers.
- 5.16 A national campaigning/community development organisation should be established with full-time staff. This organisation should facilitate the development of Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian community infrastructure and a 'national' voice.
- 5.17 A research project into the language and labels of sexual identity used in Asian and Black cultures should be commissioned.
- 5.18 A research project into Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian histories should be commissioned.
- 5.19 A research project into Asian and Black religious perspectives on sexual identity should be commissioned.
- 5.20 A national Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian youth publication should be initiated.
- 5.21 In considering and using the research findings, agencies, researchers and workers looking at Asian and Black bisexual, gay and lesbian youth issues *should not assume or expect that these experiences, issues and needs will be found in all cases at all times*. They should be aware of them, and develop strategies to deal with them.

6 Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline

- 6.1 To reflect the Helpline's catchment area and service users, the Helpline should change its name to the *Berkshire or Thames Valley Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian and Trans-gendered Helpline*.
- 6.2 The findings of the research project clearly demonstrate that there is a need for anonymous and confidential *helpline* services, whatever new services are developed in the future.
- 6.3 Given that the Helpline is ReachOUT's main referral agency, it is imperative that all existing and new volunteers are aware of the correct referral procedure. To this end, a training session by ReachOUT should become an integral component of the Helpline's core training package (see 1.25).
- 6.4 The Helpline's Training Officer should ensure that its volunteers have access to training on a range of issues including abuse, Asian and Black issues, bullying, coming out, cottaging and cruising, domestic violence, gender dysphoria, housing issues, parent issues, sexual health, suicide and youth issues. Training should take the form of regular seminars and/or workshops, provided in-house or externally, and should utilise local and national research.
- 6.5 The Helpline should develop clear and robust referral procedures with any new projects that are developed, for example, new bisexual, gay and lesbian youth projects (see 1.23 and 1.24), a gender dysphoria support group (see 12.5), a carers' and parents' support group (see 1.38), etc.

- 6.6 The Helpline should develop an Internet site with a database of local and national helping agencies, details of the local scene, an e-mail response service, etc. There should be links to other sites, including ReachOUT's.
- 6.7 The Helpline should offer young people one to one sessions, staffed by Helpline and ReachOUT workers. These should be available to 14- and 15-year olds. It should be remembered that the age of consent refers to the legal age of consent for sexual activity, not the provision of services for young people (see 1.1).
- 6.8 The Helpline should develop a service whereby people can access advice, information, resources and support in a confidential and safe venue using an appointment system.
- 6.9 Given the research project's findings (see page 224-225), the Helpline should revise its publicity strategy to target young people and other minority groups (young Asian and Black people, young women) in areas in addition to Reading.
- 6.10 The Helpline should continue to develop its links with the community safety sector (including Thames Valley Police) and should continue to operate the Homophobia Reporting Service (see 2.22).
- 6.11 The Helpline should employ a full-time Development Worker to undertake these recommendations.

7 Women's Issues

- 7.1 Women-only activities and space (within existing organisations or in the form of new projects) should be encouraged and actively promoted.
- 7.2 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, and other helping agencies, should actively target women in terms of publicity, resources, service provision, etc. and should actively challenge sexist behaviour and language.
- 7.3 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, and other helping agencies, should ensure that publicity and resources are inclusive, positive and representative in terms of gender.
- 7.4 Bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations, and other helping agencies, should undertake targeted work with young women on a range of issues, particularly focusing on eating disorders, independent living, self-harm, suicide and sexual health (see page 229).

8 Gender Dysphoria Issues

- 8.1 A national research project should be commissioned to investigate the incidence of gender dysphoria and the experiences, issues and needs of trans-gendered people, particularly young people. The project should investigate trans-gendered people's experiences of abuse and violence, their experiences of employment and other discrimination, their experiences of health services and should include an assessment of the status of the trans-gendered population as a whole (i.e. the stage reached by individuals in terms of diagnosis and treatment).

- 8.2 Although transsexuals (and other trans-gendered people) are often defined as suffering from gender dysphoria, it is harmful to treat trans-gendered people as ‘disordered people’. Rather than attempt to change or ‘cure’, service providers should offer advice, counselling, information and support to enable people to cope with, and clarify, their identity confusion. Since surgery is not an option during adolescence, providing counselling, hormonal treatment and support for young people is imperative.
- 8.3 There is a need for appropriate and sensitive literature and resources on gender dysphoria issues. This material should be more ‘human’, not solely based on the clinical and medical aspects of gender dysphoria as at present. This material should be designed and produced with young as well as older people in mind.
- 8.4 Local statutory and voluntary sector helping agencies should be made aware of the findings of this research as they relate to gender dysphoria. In particular, they should be made aware of the specific experiences, issues and needs of young trans-gendered people.
- 8.5 An independent Reading-based support group for trans-gendered people should be established. This group should provide services for young people, including advice, information and support. The Beaumont Society and Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline should be the main referral agencies for this group (see 6.5).
- 8.6 The existence of a support group in Reading should be widely publicised and referral procedures with key agencies (e.g. counsellors, GPs, schools, etc.) should be developed.
- 8.7 Staff from local statutory and voluntary sector helping agencies (GPs, health and housing workers, mental health workers, No.5 Youth Counselling Service, police officers, ReachOUT, Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline, Reading Victim Support, University of Reading Counselling Service, etc.) should have access to training around issues of gender dysphoria.
- 8.8 A resource bank and library (with a postal loan service) should be established – either by a future independent support group for trans-gendered people or by an existing organisation – to enable people to have access to books, videos and other resources on gender dysphoria.
- 8.9 The issue of gender dysphoria should be covered in personal and social education lessons in schools to ensure that young people are aware of its existence. Information about support services for those with gender dysphoria should be made available to all students.

9 Agency Issues

Given the need to standardise the quality of service provision across the private, statutory and voluntary sectors, agencies should work towards offering a Service Standard Guarantee to staff and service users. The Service Standard Guarantee, pledges 9.1-9.8, should include pledges to:

- 9.1 Develop a comprehensive equality policy that specifically includes bisexuals, gays and lesbians. Staff teams should regularly discuss *how* to implement the policy – i.e. everyday work *practice* and how it can be improved – as well as policy content.
- 9.2 Develop guidelines about good practice and minimum service delivery standards in terms of equality.

- 9.3 Provide a supportive environment for bisexual, gay and lesbian staff by developing a Confidentiality Policy and a Discrimination and Harassment Policy to combat abuse, bullying and harassment.
- 9.4 Ensure that they create an inclusive, positive, respectful and safe environment for bisexual, gay and lesbian service users, for example, the images and language used in publicity, waiting areas, etc.
- 9.5 Provide staff with regular seminars and workshops on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues and needs.
- 9.6 Provide staff with *specific* training on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.
- 9.7 Ensure that staff have access to and use resources on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues. Agencies should ensure that staff have access to resources (information, literature, training materials, etc.) on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, to both improve the workplace and for use with service users. Agencies should ensure that staff are aware of ReachOUT's Workers Resource Service.
- 9.8 Ensure that referral procedures are developed with local bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations, specifically ReachOUT and Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline.
- 9.9 Monitor service users' sexual identity in an anonymous, non-intrusive and reassuring manner. Agencies should develop an appropriate and sensitive system for monitoring the sexual identity (preferably using anonymous self-completion monitoring forms). This will enable staff teams to both reflect on their practice and ensure that all sections of the community have access to services. Ongoing monitoring will highlight under-represented groups, and perhaps therefore, the need for targeted publicity and work.
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- 9.10 Agencies should assess the need for, and encourage the development (and funding) of, bisexual, gay and lesbian service users' support groups.
- 9.11 Agencies should undertake regular evaluation of service users' issues and needs.
- 9.12 Agencies that meet the Service Standard Guarantee benchmark (see 9.1-9.8) should be awarded, and should display, a 'Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian-friendly' notice. The Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Forum (see 2.7) should administer awards.
- 9.13 Agencies should nominate representatives to attend the Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Forum and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum (see 2.7 and 2.21).
- 9.14 There is a need for a research project into bisexual, gay and lesbian issues within the private sector. The research project should identify the incidence of staff abuse, bullying and harassment, equality policies, recruitment and promotion issues, training issues, etc.

10 Secondary School Issues

(Also see Education section: recommendations 2.26-2.32.)

- 10.1 All schools should ensure that they have anti-bullying, equality and sex education policies that specifically include reference to bisexuals, gays and lesbians.

- 10.2 All schools should ensure that they are safe and supportive environments for bisexual, gay and lesbian staff and students.
- 10.3 All schools should provide training for governors, headteachers, teachers and ancillary staff on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.
- 10.4 All schools should ensure that staff are aware of, and have access to, the Education Department's resource bank and database (see 2.29 and 2.30).
- 10.5 All schools should ensure that their libraries have a diverse stock of books, including those of interest to bisexuals, gays and lesbians.
- 10.6 All schools should allow access to the Outreach Team and the Outreach Peer Support Team to deliver peer support to their students (see 1.16 and 1.17).
- 10.7 All schools, either directly or by referring to other agencies, should provide their students with access to a *free* counselling service. It is important that students can access this service discreetly and that their anonymity and confidentiality is assured.
- 10.8 All school staff should be aware of the referral procedure for ReachOUT and the Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline, and any carers' and parents' support group that is developed in the future (see 1.25 and 1.38).
- 10.9 All schools should offer students access to information about local bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations and services. This information should be included in school handbooks and displayed *permanently* on noticeboards.
- 10.10 All schools should monitor and record homophobic abuse, bullying and harassment. This information should be shared with the Berkshire Anti-Homophobia Group and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum (see 2.21).
- 10.11 Together with Health Promotion, the Youth and Community Service and other agencies, schools should develop and conduct an Anti-Bullying Campaign to raise awareness of homophobia and other bisexual, gay and lesbian issues among parents, students and teachers (see 3.6).
- 10.12 Representatives from each school should attend the Bisexual, gay and Lesbian Forum and the Reading Homophobic Incidents Forum (see 2.7 and 2.21).

11 Worker Issues

As part of the effort to improve the quality of service provision across a range of agencies (in the private, statutory and voluntary sectors), so ensuring that they can offer a Service Standard Guarantee (Section 9 – Agency Issues), workers should pledge to:

- 11.1 Work within their organisation's equality policy (or lobby for the development of a policy if it does not exist or lobby for its improvement if not comprehensive). Workers should be aware of their organisation's equality policy and its implications for the workplace environment and service provision. Staff teams should regularly discuss *how* to implement the policy – i.e. everyday work *practice* and how it can be improved – as well as policy content. Workers should ensure that the workplace environment is safe and welcoming for bisexual, gay and lesbian staff and service users. Workers

should respect the confidentiality of other workers' and service users' sexual identity. Workers should operate in a non-judgemental way.

- 11.2 Undertake training on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues (or lobby for the provision of training opportunities). Workers should have access to *specific* training on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, utilising local and national research.
 - 11.3 Ensure the availability and use of resources on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues. Workers should ensure that they have access to resources (information, literature, training materials, etc.) on bisexual, gay and lesbian issues, to both improve the workplace and for use with service users. Workers should be aware of ReachOUT's Workers Resource Service.
 - 11.4 Ensure they have access to a handbook on local and national bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations, and bisexual, gay and lesbian issues (see 3.17).
 - 11.5 Know how to refer service users to bisexual, gay and lesbian helping organisations. Workers should know how to refer service users to local bisexual, gay and lesbian helping agencies (specifically, ReachOUT and Reading Lesbian and Gay Helpline, see 1.25).
 - 11.6 Monitor service users' sexual identity in an anonymous, non-intrusive and reassuring manner (or lobby their agencies to develop monitoring systems). Workers should develop an appropriate and sensitive system for monitoring the sexual identity (preferably using anonymous self-completion monitoring forms). This will enable staff teams to both reflect on their practice and ensure that all sections of the community have access to services. Ongoing monitoring will highlight under-represented groups, and perhaps therefore, the need for targeted publicity and work.
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- 11.7 Bisexual, gay and lesbian staff – within the private, statutory and voluntary sectors – should assess the need for a Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Workers' Group. The purpose of a group could be to (a) provide peer support, and (b) act as a lobbying group re the recommendations.

12 General Issues

- 12.1 An extensive need assessment should be conducted with bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations and individuals to ascertain whether there is a desire and need for a Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Community Centre. The Centre should include a bookshop/café, meeting and office space, etc. The Centre should be funded and managed either as a consortium or as an independent trust.
- 12.2 Given that many bisexual, gay and lesbian organisations in Berkshire face similar issues and problems (funding, space, staff, etc.) a Bisexual Gay and Lesbian Summit should be organised. The purpose of the Summit should be to (a) develop a bisexual, gay and lesbian community 'voice', (b) look at the short-, medium- and long-term financing of bisexual, gay and lesbian community organisations, (c) dovetail projects and work to avoid duplication, (d) assess the need to campaign and lobby, (e) identify service gaps and needs and how these can be met, (f) develop a Reading Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Forum and (g) assess the desire and need for a Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Community Centre (see 13.1).

- 12.3 A National Bisexual, Gay and Lesbian Youth Issues Conference should be organised by a multi-agency group. The purpose of the Conference should be to (a) disseminate the research report's findings and recommendations to statutory and voluntary sector agencies and (b) identify and share good practice.
- 12.4 A study should be conducted on how the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights (in October 2000) will impact on the local statutory and voluntary sector with regards to minority groups (specifically including bisexual, gay, lesbian and transgendered people).
- 12.5 The research report should be widely publicised through adverts in journals, magazines and newspapers, and through articles.